

Guidance for USDA's Rating Officials - Assessing Individual and Organizational Performance

Overview:

USDA prides itself as being a performance driven organization focusing on the achievement of results and providing a workplace environment where employees can be successful. A thriving organization is one this is based on the success of each of its employees, and vice versa. For our employees to succeed, they need to be aware of relevant performance data - the goals and individual measures that are used to track and observe performance, as well as supervisory and customer/stakeholder feedback, and the goals for their immediate organization.

Individual Performance:

As you plan performance at the start of each appraisal period, strive to directly involve your workforce in developing those measures and job specific standards for successful performance. It is vital for employees to know where they fit within their organization and that their work contributes to the organization's ability to achieve its goals and fulfill its mission. Getting employees involved in the planning process will help them understand the goals of the organization, what needs to be done, why it needs to be done, how well it should be done, and the consequences faced by the organization if not done.

Throughout the year all managers and supervisors are required to regularly assess the progress their workforce is making toward mission accomplishment and meeting organizational goals. In particular, the mid-year review is the time to meet with employees to discuss their accomplishments to date, progress toward meeting performance standards and goals, and to make adjustments in standards and goals if needed. You may also meet more frequently to recognize them for a job well done or how to achieve improvement. By aligning your staff's performance standards with the organization's goals and objectives and regularly measuring their progress, you help to keep your employees and your organization on the road to success.

Organizational Performance:

When organizational performance is linked to the individual performance ratings and measured, an organization might find that most of its employees are rated high when the organization as a whole has failed to meet its objectives. This type of result may be evidence that managers need to do a better job of linking organizational performance to individual performance, and monitoring the goals set at the beginning of the appraisal period.

The following steps will assist in factoring in organizational performance results with the annual rating/evaluation of your employees:

Steps:

1. Gathering Data – Sources of Organizational Performance Data.

Gather and analyze data relative to the organization's attainment of goals, objectives, targets, and metrics. The strategic plan, unit work plan, or other planning documents are used to identify the specific goals, objectives, targets for the organization and outline the central framework for agency performance management. USDA's agencies use various systems to track and report actual performance data on a

recurring basis throughout the appraisal cycle. These systems include Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), Performance Accountability Report (PAR), Performance Accountability System (PAS), Budget and Performance Management System (BPMS), scorecards, etc. Know who in your agency is able to provide this information, for example, the Human Resources Division, Strategic Planning Division, and the Budget and Planning Division.

Meetings, reports, newsletters, charts, email, publications, and the intranet are delivery methods used to disseminate program performance information, measures, and results. Many organizations have their own internal tracking mechanisms to measure organizational performance. Senior managers should use these methods to communicate this information to subordinate employees.

2. Compare work unit performance to organizational goals, operating plans, and objectives.

- a. Review work unit performance goals.
- b. Identify how well the work unit performed given the available tools, human, financial and technological resources, customer satisfaction, and support provided to meet expectations for performance.

3. Compare actual employee accomplishments to organizational outcomes.

- a. Consider the employee's achievements for each results-focused performance element in relation to the organization's performance data.
- b. Rate the employee's contributions to the performance goals in the employee's performance plan.
- c. Provide the employee with feedback on specific and measurable actions that reinforce good performance and addresses poor performance.

When a results-driven Agency considers organizational performance with the annual performance appraisal of individual employees, it results in the retention of experienced and good performing staff, improved and continuous job performance, expected organizational outcomes, and provides individuals a strategic view of their performance and opportunities for meeting expectations and Agency goals.